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August 30, 2018

To: Senator Kirsten E. Gillibrand
CC: Jess Fassler, Chief of Staff, U.S. Office of Senator Kirsten E. Gillibrand
Keith Castaldo, General Counsel, U.S. Office of Senator Kirsten E. Gillibrand

Russell Senate Office Building 478
Washington, D.C. 20002

Dear Senator Gillibrand:

On Monday, August 13, 2018, I submitted my intent to resign from my position as [redacted] in your Washington, D.C. office to Jess Fassler, Chief of Staff. Given the circumstance surrounding my decision to resign, I feel it necessary to have documentation of the reasons for my departure.

On Wednesday, July 25, 2018, I filed a complaint to Anne Bradley, Deputy Chief of Staff, detailing that I had experienced sexual harassment from Abbas Malik, Special Assistant to Senator Gillibrand. The office began an investigation that day and had resolved it by Monday, July 30, 2018. I was told that the office and Senate HR concluded they did not find cause to fire Abbas for sexual harassment. Anne and Jess told me that it was a series of misinterpretations and too much of a "he said, she said" situation. However, Abbas was punished for making inappropriate remarks, which resulted in a demotion. I tried to make the best of the situation and continue to do my job, trusting that the office had done everything they could to protect me. While I was upset with the outcome, I felt satisfied that there had been a fair process. However, the following events, outlined below, left me feeling upset, confused and devalued, and directly led to my decision to resign from my position in your office.

On Tuesday, July 31, 2018, Anne came into my office and said that "Jess told Abbas that he could have fired him for a number of reasons but isn't going to. So he should consider himself lucky." Thinking I had the full support of the office, I was deeply confused and saddened by this. Later that afternoon, I decided to discuss this with Jess and Anne. Jess responded to me by saying "You could also be fired at any minute, for any reason." I felt defeated, not just from the humiliation and pain that the harassment had brought me, but that in attempting to seek appropriate disciplinary actions for my harasser, my experience was devalued. I was devalued.

On Monday, August 13, 2018, after discussing my resignation with Jess, he said to me, "I could have fired you too. You fed Abbas alcohol while he was on duty." That statement is grossly inaccurate and I felt as though I was being belittled, insulted and intimidated even when I was trying to quit.

After the 2016 election I was devastated by the choice that America made, and I felt driven to work for a politician who would fight for women's rights at a time when they were being openly threatened in our country. Senator Gillibrand, you were the public servant I wanted to work for, because of your strong stance on sexual harassment in the work place, committee to work as a champion for women and desire for transparency in politics.

I trusted and leaned on this statement that you made: "You need to draw a line in the sand and say none of it is O.K. None of it is acceptable," Your office chose to go against your public belief that women shouldn't accept sexual harassment in any form and portrayed my experience as a misinterpretation instead of what it actually was: harassment and ultimately, intimidation.

I have offered my resignation because of how poorly the investigation and post-investigation was handled. I hope that your office will choose to handle cases like this with more sensitivity and understanding in the future.

Sincerely,

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